

Winter Abundance of Waterfowl and Waste Rice in Managed Arkansas Rice Fields

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Winter flooding harvested rice fields benefits waterfowl, other waterbirds, subsequent agriculture, and soil-water conservation. We conducted experiments in six rice fields on one farm near Stuttgart, Arkansas, during winters 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 to evaluate effects of different post-harvest, stubble-management practices and flooding on densities of waterfowl and waste rice. During both winters, rolled rice paddies contained the greatest density of mallards (1.7 birds/ac/survey); burned paddies attracted the most other dabbling ducks (1.0 bird/ac/survey) and geese (1.2 birds/ac/survey). Paddies with standing stubble contained the most waste rice in late fall (86 lb/ac), but geese may have depleted fields of rice by late December. Nonetheless, waterfowl continued using rice fields during winter. We recommend managers burn and flood rice fields to provide attractive habitat for waterfowl and other waterbirds and reduce stubble economically before spring planting.

Havens, J.H. 2007. Winter abundance of waterfowl, water birds, and waste rice in managed Arkansas rice fields. Thesis, Mississippi State University.



Waterfowl feeding in winter flooded fields are observed by graduate student Houston Havens to determine how land management practices effect waterfowl use.

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